In The Claims:

Claim 19 has been cancelled without prejudice to pursue Applicants' rights in the future to pursue a continuation or divisional application.

Please amend claims 5-8, 20 and 21 as follows:

1. (Original) A method to induce stem cell differentiation in cardiomyocytes, wherein the cells are exposed for a period of time and in effective amounts to a protein of the EGF-CFC family or its derivatives, which comprises at least the EGF and CFC domains.

2. (Original) A method according to Claim 1 in which the EGF and CFC domains derive from the sequence of the Cripto protein.

3. (Original) A method according to Claim 2 in which the EGF and CFC domains derive from the sequence of human Cripto protein.

4. (Original) A method according to Claim 2 in which the EGF and CFC domains derive from the sequence of mouse Cripto protein.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to ~~one of the preceding~~ claim~~s~~ 1 in which cell exposure occurs through genetic expression in stem cells via a suitable vector.

6. (Currently Amended) Stem cells induced to differentiate into cardiomyocytes obtainable according to the method of ~~one of previous~~ claim~~s~~ 1.

7. (Currently Amended) A composition for the treatment of heart diseases that comprises stem cells ~~treated according to Claim 6~~ obtainable by the method of Claim 1.

8. (Currently Amended) The use of the stem cells according to Claim ~~6~~ 1 for the treatment of heart diseases.

9. (Original) A composition for therapeutic use for treating heart disorders that comprises a therapeutically effective amount of a protein or its derivative, having at least the EGF and CFC domains of a protein of the EGF-CFC family.

10. (Original) A composition according to Claim 9 in which the protein has at least the EGF and CFC domains of the Cripto protein.

11. (Original) A composition according to Claim 9 in which the EGF and CFC domains derive from the human Cripto protein sequence.

12. (Original) A composition according to Claim 9 in which the EGF and CFC domains derive from the mouse Cripto protein sequence.

13. (Original) A method to induce stem cell differentiation into neuronal cells, wherein the cells are exposed for a period of time and in effective amounts to an inhibitor of the Cripto protein or the engineering of the cells in

such a manner that they do not express endogenous functioning Cripto.

14. (Original) A method according to Claim 13 in which exposure to a Cripto inhibitor occurs in the early phases of stem cell differentiation.

15. (Original) A method according to Claim 13 in which the Cripto protein inhibitor is an anti-Cripto antibody or functional fragments thereof.

16. (Original) A method according to Claim 13 in which the Cripto protein inhibitor is a peptide specifically selected from a random combinatorial peptide library.

17. (Original) A method according to Claim 13 in which the Cripto protein inhibitor is an antagonist of the Alq4(receptor)-Cripto(co-receptor)-Nodal(ligand)pathway.

18. (Original) A method according to Claim 17 in which the antagonist is the peptide Cerberus or its functional derivatives.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) A composition for the treatment of neuropathologies that comprises the stem cells ~~according to~~ obtainable by the method of Claim ~~19~~ 13.

21. (Currently Amended) The use of the stem cells ~~according to~~ obtainable by the method of Claim ~~19~~ 13 for treating neuropathologies.

22. (Original) The use of the Cripto protein or its inhibitors in the preparation of a composition able to direct stem cell differentiation toward the neuronal lineage.